



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS SURVIVING COLD WEATHER *Residents Still Urged to Remove Standing Water on Property*

County Vector Control officials announced today that four dead birds have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) so far this year. The three American crows, and one Red-shouldered hawk were found in Poway, San Marcos and Sorrento Valley.

"Despite the cold weather, mosquitoes are still spreading West Nile virus to our local birds," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "Neglected green swimming pools at foreclosed properties continue to provide prime breeding grounds for mosquitoes. We urge residents, realtors, pool maintenance companies and landscapers to report green pools so our Vector Control technicians can put mosquito-eating fish into the pools to control breeding."

West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease that can be transmitted from birds to humans by infected mosquitoes. About 80 percent of people infected with the virus do not experience any symptoms, but some become ill within three to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

County residents can protect themselves by removing standing water from around their homes to prevent breeding, by making sure that window and door screens are in good condition and by using insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or IR 3535. For more information regarding repellents, visit www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/repellentupdates. Unapproved repellents may not be effective.

The County's West Nile virus Web site, www.SDFightthebite.com has a mosquito prevention checklist that includes the most common backyard mosquito breeding sources from birdbaths to wheelbarrows.

Residents should check their property weekly to ensure that standing water is not a breeding source for mosquitoes. For information on WNV, or to report mosquito breeding sites, please call County Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636).

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